

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 03891 300741Z

12

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 DPW-01 AID-20 SR-02 ORM-03 RSR-01 /146 W

----- 093318

R 290515Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0789

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BG, PK, IN

SUBJECT REPATRIATION OF BENGALLEES

REF: ISLAMALAD 6738; GENEVA 4508

SUMMARY: THE FIRST PLANE LOAD OF THE 5,000 BENGALLEES
DUE TO BE REPATRIATED FROM PAKISTAN UNDER UNHCR
AUSPICES REACHED DACCA THE AFTERNOON OF AUG. 28.
THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST 123 RECEIVED NO ADVANCE
MEDIA PUBLICITY. NO SENIOR BDG OFFICIAL WAS PRESENT
FOR THE EVENT. END SUMMARY.

1. ARIANA AFGHAN AIRLINES BROUGHT THE FIRST PLANE LOAD
OF BENGALLEE REPATRIATES MID AFTERNOON AUG 28. TO
AVOID A CRUSH AT THE AIR TERMINAL NO ADVANCE
PUBLICITY OF THEIR COMING WAS MADE. A GOVERNMENT
WIRE SERVICE REPORTER NOTED THAT HAD THE ARRIVAL
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PAGE 02 DACCA 03891 300741Z

BEEN PUBLICIZED CROWDS OUTNUMBERING MUJIB'S RALLIES

WOULD HAVE GATHERED.

2. THE RETURNEES' ARRIVAL WAS UNEMOTIONAL AND THEIR OFFICIAL RECEPTION PERFUNCTORY. WITHOUT RELATIVES AND FRIENDS TO GREET THEM, THE RETURNING BENGALLEES PROCEEDED TO THE CUSTOMS AREA WITHOUT A TEAR OR HARDLY A WORD. MOREOVER, THE GOVERNMENT'S RECEPTION WAS COOL. NO SENIOR BDG OFFICIAL OR AWAMI LEAGUE DIGNITARY APPEARED TO GREET THE REPATRIATES. PRESS

COVERAGE WAS SCANT. CUSTOMS AND HEALTH FORMALITIES WERE NOT LIGHTENED WITH GIFTS OF TEA, FLOWERS, OR SWEETS. ONCE PROCESSED, THE REPATRIATES WERE TAKEN TO A SORTING CENTER OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL WHERE DACCA MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES WILL ISSUE IDENTITY PAPERS AND ASSIST IN LOCATING FAMILIES. DESPITE THE COLORLESS RECEPTION, BANGALEES AT THE AIRPORT WE QUESTIONED SAID WITH CONSIDERABLE SENTIMENT HOW HAPPY THEY WERE AND HOW MUCH THEY HOPED THIS FLIGHT WOULD SPEED THE PROCESS OF A SETTLEMENT WITH PAKISTAN. REFLECTING THE WIDESPREAD SENTIMENT FOR NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS A SENIOR BANGLADESH RED CROSS OFFICIAL AT THHE AIRPORT REMARKED "PERHAPS WE WILL BE GOOD FRIENDS OF PAKISTAN IN A SHORT TIME".

3. THE FIRST ARRIVALS WERE ANNOUNCED AS LARGELY DESTITUTE BENGALLEES FROM THE KARACHI AREA. THEY INCLUDED PRINCIPALLY OLD MEN AND WOMEN, MOTHERS AND SMALL CHILDREN. THE CONTRAST, HOWEVER, BETWEEN THE DRAB ATTIRE AND POSSESSIONS OF THE AFTERNOON'S NORMAL CROWD AND TRAVELLERS AT DACCA AIRPORT WITH THE GAILY COLORED SARIS, NEW SHOES, PLASTIC RAINCOATS, JEWELRY, AND ALUMINUM SUITCASES OF THE "DESTITUTE" REPATRIATES WAS MOST STRIKING AND WAS NOTED AS SUCH BY RESIDENT BANGALEES IN ATTENDANCE.

4. UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE COAT AND ICRC DELEGATION CHIEF COURVOISIER CONFIRMED THE FLIGHTS WOULD TAKE PLACE DAILY, INCREASING TO TWICE DAILY IF THE EMBARKATION OF PAKS IN KATHMANDU COULD BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 DACCA 03891 300741Z

SPEEDED.

5. OBTAINING BDG CONSENT FOR THE AIRLIFT WAS NOT EASY. UNROB'S LACOSTE PROVIDED THE CHARGE AUG 27 BACKGROUND ON THE BDG'S DECISION TO DELAY THE UNCHR SPONSORED TRANSFER. FOREIGN SECRETARY ENAYET KARIM SUMMONED LACOSTE AUG 21 AT ONE HOUR'S NOTICE TO TELL HIM THE OPERATION WAS OFF UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. IN EXCUSE

KARIM PLEADED DELAYS IN ORGANIZING RECEPTION FACILITIES. LACOSTE REMINDED KARIM FOREIGN MINISTER KAMAL HOSSAIN HAD GIVEN HIS WORD DURING HIS MID-AUGUST VISIT TO GENEVA. LACOSTE FURTHER NOTED THE COST OF A DELAY, THE ADVERSE REACTION OF CONTRIBUTING GOVERNMENTS, AND THE HARDSHIP WROUGHT ON THOSE WAITING TO MOVE. HE ASKED KARIM IF THERE WAS NOT SOME OTHER REASON FOR THE BDG DECISION. KARIM SAID NOT.

6. WE KNOW FROM THE ICRC THAT RECEPTION FACILITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS WERE READY BY AUG 21 AND CAN ONLY SURMISE THE INITIAL CANCELLATION WAS RELATED TO THE NEW DELHI INDO-PAK TALKS.
NEWBERRY

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